

“OUT OF THE DEPTHS”

NO. 2353

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 25, 1894
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“For innumerable evils have compassed me about:
mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up;
they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.
Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.”*
Psalm 40:12-13

YOU remember that these were the words of a man of God, a man after God’s own heart, a man undoubtedly the possessor of the grace of God. They were the words also of a preacher, one who could say, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation....I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.”

This teaches us that however eminent for grace a man of God may be, it may happen to him sometimes that the thought of his sin may be paramount over his faith. There are times when the Lord seems to give His servants a new start, it is not a second conversion, but it is something very like it. They are made to see once more the deformity of their character, the defilement of their nature, the inward sinfulness of their hearts, that they may prize more than ever they have done the cleansing fountain of atoning blood, and the wonderful power of the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

I mention this fact so that, if any of you are in trouble like that described in the text, you may be comforted by knowing that there are the footprints of a fellow believer in this dark part of the way you have to travel. Others have been here before you, others who were undoubtedly the people of God, others who were saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

You have had to write bitter things against yourself, so have other people. Have you ever felt as though you were surrounded by sin so that you could not look up? You are not the first man who has been in such a plight, and you are not likely to be the last. This part of the road has been frequented by full many of the pilgrims to Zion’s city bound. All the people of God have not taken this route, there are different ways of traveling along the road to heaven, but some of the true saints of God have gone by this rough path, and I mention this fact in order that no troubled heart may fall into despair because of the painful experience through which it is at the present time passing.

I. In trying to describe a soul in the condition mentioned in our text, let me say first, that we have evidently before us A SOUL BESET, “For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head.”

The text describes a man who is first, made to see *the countless number of his sins*. He did not know so much about them before, he said that he was a sinner and he meant it, but then he wrote the word in very small letters. Now, a further enlightenment has been granted to him, the Spirit of judgment and of burning has come to deal with him, and now he writes the sentence, “I AM A SINNER,” in capitals so large that he wants the whole sky and all the sea as well to make the page on which to emblazon the terrible words.

With an emphasis of which he used to know nothing, he now calls himself a sinner, for sins that he had forgotten come up before his memory. Now he sees that there is a great number of sins in any one sin, like so many Chinese boxes shut up one inside another.

Moreover, things which he formerly did not recognize as sins he now perceives to be among the deadliest of transgressions. He realizes that the imagination of evil is sin, that sin is any want of conformity to the perfection of God. Now he seems as if he swarms with sins, and yet, a short while ago he thought himself clean and pure in the sight of God.

It is wonderful what a ray of light will do, the sun suddenly shines into a room, and the whole air seems full of innumerable specks of dust dancing up and down in the sunbeam. The light does not make the room full of dust, it only shows you what was always there, but which you did not see until the sun shone in, and if a beam of God's true light were to shine into some of your hearts, you would think very differently of yourselves from what you have ever done.

I question whether any one among us could bear to see himself as God sees him. I think it is highly probable that if any man were to see his own heart as it really is, he would go mad, it would be a sight too dreadful for an awakened conscience and a sensitive reason to endure.

And when the Lord does come to any of His servants, and reveals sin in its true character, unless there is a corresponding revelation of the cleansing blood, it puts a man into a very dreadful condition of mind. He says that his sins are more than the hairs of his head, he feels that that is a very poor comparison, so he says they are innumerable, they cannot be counted. In the process of trying to count them, we would have sinned again I know not how many times, sinned in our judgments about our sins, our thoughts about our sins would only increase the number of them.

Now, this is no morbid feeling of a perverted brain, it is a true and strictly accurate statement of a sad fact. It is not possible for any of us to think too badly of ourselves as we really are in the sight of God. Comfort does not come by trying to lessen our sense of sin, it comes in a much better and more effectual way, as I will presently try to show you.

This man then, is troubled by the number of his sins. He also seems to be greatly perplexed by *a sort of omnipresence of sin*, for he says, “Innumerable evils have compassed me about.” He looks that way and says, “Surely there is a gap there, I have not sinned in that direction.” But no, there are sins in that quarter. He turns sharply round, and he looks this way and says, “Perhaps I shall find a lane there, through which I may escape, I hope I have not sinned in that way,” but when he steadily looks, he finds that he has sinned there too. These innumerable evils have compassed him about.

David said of his enemies, “They compassed me about like bees.” They were all around him. When a swarm of bees gets about a man, they are above, beneath, around, everywhere stinging, every one stinging, until he seems to be stung in every part of his body. So, when conscience wakes up the whole hive of our sins, we find ourselves compassed about with innumerable evils, sins at the board and sins on the bed, sins at the task and sins in the pew, sins in the street and sins in the shop, sins on land and sins at sea, sins of body, soul, and spirit, sins of eye, of lip, of hand, of foot, sins everywhere, every way sins.

It is a horrible discovery when it seems to a man as if sin had become well-nigh as omnipresent with him as God is. It cannot be actually so, for sin cannot be everywhere as God is, but it is hard to say where sin is not when once conscience is awake to see it. Our whole life, from our first responsible moment even until now, appears defiled. There are sins even in our holy things, only half the heart is laid upon God's altar, and the sacramental bread itself is defiled as it passes into our mouth. Oh, it is dreadful when the heart is awakened to see that it is even so! “Innumerable evils have compassed me about.”

But that is not all, this man is so beset with sin that *it seems to hold him in a terrible grip*. Read this, “Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me,” as though they were so many griffins, or other monsters of the old fables. They come and fix their claws into him, they have taken hold upon him. Did any of you ever feel the grip of a single sin? I hope that you have, for you have never been rightly delivered from it if you have never felt its grasp.

I once knew a young man who had not a true sense of sin, he believed himself to be a sinner, but he never had a real conviction of sin. He was a working man, steady and upright, and he prided himself

upon his sobriety and industry. One day, in some little frolic, he upset an oil can, and when his employer came in and asked, “Who did that?” he said that he did not. No one ever found out who upset that oil can, but he knew that he did it. Knocking over that can was not, in itself, an act of criminality, but he felt mean and despicable because he had told a lie, and that lie just fixed itself upon his heart, clawed at it and tore away at it so that he could not get away from its cruel clutches.

He came to the house of prayer on the Lord’s-day to try to get rid of this iniquity that had taken hold upon him, but it kept its hold month after month, hissing in his ear, “You have been a liar.” Nobody knew of it but himself, yet that one sin was quite enough to take hold upon him, and to fix him with an awful grip.

It was in this house of God that he was delivered from that sin through the precious blood of Christ, and I said within myself, when I heard the whole story, “Well, I am glad that sin took hold of that young man, for there were many sins beside which he afterwards thought of and acknowledged with tears before his God, but they had all passed by unnoticed, they had never laid hold on him as that one lie had.

Let me tell you, friend, if you have a number of sins which have once taken hold on you, you will be something like a stag when the whole pack of hounds has seized him, and his neck and his flanks and every bone in him seem to feel the hounds’ teeth gnawing at them. I speak what I know, I have felt these dogs upon me, and I have had to cry to God for deliverance, and peradventure I am speaking to some soul that is in that condition tonight. It is no child’s play when this is the case. Here we have to deal with stern facts, and it is only God, by some great act of grace, who can set free a poor soul that is once beset in this way.

Thus, you see, he realizes the countless number of his sins, he recognizes the almost omnipresence of his sins, and he feels the terrible grip of his sins tearing at his conscience, judging him, condemning him, breathing curses into him. Oh, if you know this experience, you can follow me when I take you a little further along this dark, dreary road!

II. Here is secondly, A SOUL BEWILDERED, “Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.”

Do you hear that, “not able to look up”? That is the only hope that a man has when he is under a sense of sin, his one way of escape is by looking up, but the psalmist says, “I am not able to look up.”

Does it not mean, first, that *he did not dare to look his sins in the face*? He felt so guilty, so self-condemned, that as the judge, when he pronounces the death sentence, covers his head by putting on the black cap, so this culprit felt that he must hide his own face. He wants to have a handkerchief tied over his eyes, for he is shocked at the sight that meets his gaze. He dares not look up, that is, he cannot face his sin.

It means also, that *he is unable to excuse himself*. He used to be as big a braggart as anybody, at one time he could talk as glibly as anyone about there being no God, and no hell, but that kind of speech is all gone out of him now. The Lord can soon knock such folly as that out of a man. Just one prick of the conscience, and the boaster is brought to his knees, and he does not try to look up for a single moment to justify or excuse himself. All he can do is to hang his head and murmur, “Guilty, guilty, guilty.” He knows then the meaning of Dr. Watts’ lines—

*“Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must confess Thee just in death;
And if my soul were sent to hell
Thy righteous law approves it well.”*

Now, I may talk to you thus, and you may not feel the force of what I am saying, but if God deals with you, it will be a different matter. You will then be brought into such a state of bewilderment that you will not be able to face your sin, or excuse yourself, or even dare to think of it, the mere thought of it will be too horrible for you.

A man in this state of bewilderment *dares not look up to read God's promises*. I come to him and I say, “Friend, do you not know that there is a Bible full of promises for such as you are? ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.’” I put my hand on his shoulder and I say, “Now, look at that promise.” He cannot look up. We read, in the 107th psalm, of some who were so ill, that when the most dainty food was brought to them, they shook their heads, for they could not touch it, “Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.”

Well, that is the condition of this man. “But,” you say, “my dear fellow, look at this passage, ‘All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.’ ‘Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy.’” “Ah!” says he, “it is too late for me, it does not apply to me.” Now, this is all a mistake, you know, the Lord is willing to receive you, my dear hearer, however horrible your offenses may have been.

If you are up to your neck in blasphemy and iniquity, Christ can make you clean in a moment. He has such sovereign power that with a word, He can forgive you, ay, and with a word, He can change your nature, and make a saint out of a sinner, an angel out of a very human devil, such power does Christ possess to save the vilest of the vile. So we say to the poor man, “Dear friend, look up! Look up at God’s promises.”

Perhaps we try what effect *the testimony of others* will have upon him. We stand in front of him and we say, “Do look at us for a moment.” There was a dear brother who prayed at the prayer meeting before the service—no doubt he is here somewhere—“Lord, save the big sinners, for,” said he, “Lord, since you have saved me, I believe that you can save anybody.” Now, that was good pleading, and I can say the same.

There are many here who would say to you, “We looked unto Christ and were lightened. We came with all our sin heavy upon us and we did but look to Jesus, and we found peace, and rest, and new hearts, and changed lives. What He has done for us, He can do for you, for He has shown forth in some of us, as he did in Paul, all longsuffering for a pattern to all others who will believe in Him unto life everlasting.”

Still, the man cannot look up. His sins have so bewildered him, his sense of guilt has so muddled his poor thoughts that he dares not look up, and yet he ought to do so. If I were suffering from a certain disease and a number of persons came to me and said, “We were afflicted exactly as you now are, but we went to Dr. So-and-so, and he cured us almost at once,” I think that I would go to that doctor, and I would try the medicine that had healed others.

Oh, I wish that some of you would try my Savior! You young people, would God that you would try Him in your youth! You older ones, I pray that you may be led to Jesus now, though your sin rises like a mountain, for He is able to forgive and to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

But this poor soul cannot yet look up, so we put our hand upon him again and we say, “But dear heart, if you will not look to the promises in the Bible, and you will not look to us who are specimens of what divine grace can do, yet do *look to Jesus on the cross*. Have you ever heard the story of how He lived and how He died? Do you not know the meaning of those blessed wounds of His? He was the Son of God, and He suffered all this for sinful men. He was pure, and holy, and innocent, yet He died, ‘the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.’ Must there not be great merit in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ? Look up. Look to Him. Look up to Jesus on the cross.”

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One;
There is life at this moment for thee;
Then look, sinner—look unto Him, and be saved—
Unto Him who was nail’d to the tree.”*

But it is no use for us to talk to him, his sins have taken hold upon him so that he cannot look up.

So we try again, and we bid him *look up to Jesus on the throne*. We say, “Do you not know that Jesus has risen from the dead? He has gone up into heaven, and He is at the right hand of God, making intercession for the transgressors. The business of Christ in heaven is to plead for sinners. Oh, how I wish that you would look up to Him! Do!” Thus we plead, but our pleading is not sufficient. Spirit of God, break these poor creatures away from their infatuation, and help them now just to look up to the living Savior who is seated at the right hand of God, pleading for the guilty, for such as they are!

Dear hearers, look to Jesus, only trust Him, a look will do it. Look, look now. In God’s name, I command you to look! In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I do not merely advise, but speaking by His authority, I bid you look and live! May He set His seal to that command, as He did when Ezekiel bade the dry bones live, and they did live! But yet I know that, apart from the Eternal Spirit, the poor soul will not look up, though looking up is the only way to safety.

III. Follow me for just a few minutes more while I notice, in the third place, that here is A SOUL FAINTING, “Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart faileth me.”

Why, that is the man who used to come in here as big as anybody, and now he cries, “My heart faileth me.” You used to sing above all the rest, did you not? And you despised those poor weeping ones, but now your lament is, “My heart faileth me.” When a man’s heart faileth him, it is as when the standard bearer of an army fainteth, everything gets in disarray.

“My heart faileth me.” You have come to a fainting condition, and when the heart fails, *death is approaching*. You feel as if you must die, you are so utterly faint. You dare not hope, energy, you have none, what can you do? “To will,” you say, “is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.” You are the man who used to think that you could believe whenever you liked, and jump into sovereign grace whenever you pleased, you do not find it so easy now, do you?

“My heart faileth me.” This is the language of one in whom *fear is working*. Why, there is poor Mercy! Poor Mercy! You, as a young girl said, “I will not come to Jesus yet, I can come to Him whenever I like,” and now you are fainting outside the gate because the big dog barks at you, and your heart fails you.

Oh, lie not there to die, dear swooning one! Jesus Christ will come to you in all your faintness. Is it not written, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly”? “When we were yet without strength.” Now you see what there is in yourself, do you not? Nothing at all. Your very heart fails you, and if sovereign grace does not interpose, you are lost, you know you are.

“Yes,” you say, “that is quite true, *I am lost*.” I am so glad that you confess this, for your confession proves that you are the one whom God has chosen unto eternal life from before the foundation of the world. You are the sort for whom Jesus died when He poured out His heart’s blood. You are already called by His grace to come to Him, for He said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” You are the very characters whom He describes as being the objects of His love.

Come to Him, just as you are, and cast yourselves upon Him. Fainting heart, do not wait till you are revived, but faint on the bosom of Jesus! Failing heart, do not wait till you grow strong again, but come and confess your failure, your spiritual bankruptcy at Christ’s feet! Remember, there are none who are declared to be clear of all obligations but those who are bankrupts before the Lord, even as Joseph Hart sings—

*“’Tis perfect poverty alone
That sets the soul at large;
While we can call one mite our own,
We have no full discharge.”*

“But I have no good feelings,” says one. I am glad of it, come to Christ for them. “But I cannot repent as I would, or believe as I would.” Then listen to Hart again—

*“True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings you nigh,
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”*

He wants nothing of you but that you will agree to let Him be everything to you. “Free grace and dying love”—I delight to ring those charming bells, oh, that every ear would welcome their blessed music! Poor fainting heart, do you specially hear the gladsome tidings of free grace and dying love, and catch at the message, and rejoice in Christ tonight! The Lord grant that it may be so!

IV. I finish, as the time has nearly gone, by introducing this man to you once more. We have had a soul beset, a soul bewildered, and a soul fainting, but here is A SOUL PLEADING, “Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up...my heart faileth me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me.”

“Oh!” says one, “I would plead with God, but I do not know how to go to Him.” Do you not? Did you ever teach your girl how to come to you when she wanted anything? She comes and she says, “Father, I want so-and-so.” You do not send her to school do you, and pay so much a week to teach her that art? No, she knows it naturally. If there is anything to be got out of a father, trust a boy or a girl for knowing how to do it.

You smile, let that smile go a little deeper. Smile again if you like, that it may go right down deep. It is in this way that you should deal with God, just as your children, being evil, know how to ask good gifts of their father, so you should know how to ask good gifts of your Father who is in heaven, and the more childlike you can be in your praying, the better.

If your boy were to come in tomorrow morning, and take out a prayer book and proceed to read the collect for the day in the same kind of tone that you can hear it read in certain churches, and then say in the same tone, “Father, I know that you are generous and noble hearted, be pleased to give me the valuable present of five shillings,” you would cry out, “Boy, hold your tongue, I cannot stand such nonsense.”

But if he says, respectfully but earnestly, “Father, I shall be very grateful if you will give me five shillings, for there is such and such a thing that I want to buy,” you say at once, “Yes, my boy, certainly, here is the money,” that is to say, if you have it and consider it wise.

I do not think that God is to be approached in a dignified, stupid way, with intoned prayers, and what Africans call “palaver.” Come to God in the simplest way possible and tell Him all that is in your heart, pour out your desires before Him, expecting that He will hear you and answer you, and go your way rejoicing that you have such a God to go to.

The easiest thing in the world to a child of God should be to talk to his Father. He should not feel as if he had to put his best coat on in order to approach the Lord. Let him stand out in the yard in his shirtsleeves and pray. Why not? Wherever you are, if you should wake up in the middle of the night, begin to pray. You would not think of going to see a person in your shirtsleeves, but your boy may come to you like that whenever he pleases.

A person said to me, some time ago, “Would you mind telling me what to say when I pray?” “I answered, “Say what you feel. Ask God for what you desire.” “But,” she said, “I am such a poor ignorant woman that I would like you to tell me the words to say.” Then I thought of the passage in Hosea, “Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.” Thus, the very words were put into the suppliants’ mouths, and in our text, David does, as it were, make a prayer that is suitable for many of you. May the Lord put it into your mouths and hearts!

I will only briefly call attention to the drift of the prayer, and first, it is *a prayer distinctly to God*. This poor bewildered heart does not look to itself, or to a priest, or to a sacrament, but it turns to God

and to God alone, and says, “Be pleased, O JEHOVAH, to deliver me: O JEHOVAH, make haste to help me.” Your only hope is in your God, salvation must come from God alone.

You know how I pictured this matter some little time ago, about the baby picked up in the street. There is somebody who is going to tell us what that baby wants. He wants some milk, and he wants to be washed, and he wants some clothes, he wants nursing, he wants soothing to sleep, he wants—well, we can go on for a week, and hardly tell all that he wants, but I will put in one word what the baby wants, and that is, his *mother*.

And you, poor soul, you want—you want—you want—you want so many, many things that I will not stay to mention them, I will put them into one word, you want your *God*. Nobody but He who made you can ever new-make you, therefore, as you need remaking, re-creating, you need your God.

Oh, poor prodigal, I know you want a new pair of boots, and a new pair of trousers, and a good dinner, and a great many other things, but most of all you want to go home to your Father, and if you go home to your Father, then you will get all the other things that you need. Cry unto God then, you who have never prayed before. May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, make you cry to your God in Christ Jesus!

And then, do you notice the style of the prayer in our text? “Be pleased, O JEHOVAH, to deliver me.” It is *an appeal to the good pleasure of God*. There is no arguing of merit, there is no plea but that of God’s good pleasure. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy; and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. Divine sovereignty is not to be denied.

No man has any right to God’s grace, if it be given to anyone, it is given by the free favor of God, as He pleases, and to whom He pleases. Shall He not do as He wills with His own? But do you, as a suppliant, take this lowly ground, “Be pleased, O JEHOVAH, to deliver me, for Your mercy’s sake, for Your goodness’ sake! Universal Ruler as You are, and able to save whom You will, for the rights of life and death are in the hands of the King of kings, be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me!” That is the way to plead with God.

And then you may, if you like, use that last sentence, “Make haste, O JEHOVAH, to deliver me!” You may *plead urgency*, you may say, “Lord, if You do not help me soon, I shall die. I am driven to such distress by my sin, that if You do not hear me soon, it will be too late. Innumerable evils have compassed me about, so that I am not able to look up. I am driven to such dire distress that my case is urgent, O Lord, help me now!”

Oh, how I wish that such a prayer as that might go up from many and many a heart in this audience! You are not truly awakened to a sense of your lost condition if you want to be saved tomorrow. If you are really convinced of sin, your prayer will be, “Make haste, O Lord, to deliver me.” I pray that you may be brought to that point tonight, so that you may not dare to go to bed till you have found your God, or if you must go to bed, may not be able to sleep till you have found your Savior, and put your trust in Him.

Dear friends, may God save every one of you! Oh, how I would pour out my very soul in pleading with you if I thought that longer talk would lead you to Christ! But words are only air and wind. Eternal Spirit, Master of all hearts, come and deal with men, and lead them to Jesus now! And unto the Triune JEHOVAH shall be the glory for ever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 40

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

If I were to read this psalm all through as referring to Christ, and to Christ only, I should be correct in so doing, but still, there is such a unity between Christ and those who compose His mystical body, that what is true of the Head is true of the members. What is true of the Vine, is true of the branches. What is true of Christ, is true of those who are in Him. Therefore, this psalm relates to David as well as

to “great David’s greater Son,” and it also concerns every one who is of the royal seed, every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the psalm begins—

Verse 1. *I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*

“I waited.” “Do not beggars wait long at a fellow creature’s door for some pitiful alms, and should not I be content to linger at Mercy’s gate for such great boons as I am craving?”

“I waited patiently.” Well may we tarry in patience till JEHOVAH’s time to help, since we know that “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him,” and if He be full of pity, we can well afford to be patient.

“I waited patiently for JEHOVAH.” Those who have been most mighty in prayer have sometimes had to wait for the answers to their supplications. Do not expect the Lord to hear you today or tomorrow. He may hear you before you speak, according to His promise, “Before they call, I will answer,” but He may, for the trial of your faith, make you wait. Are you able to wait? Then you are certain to receive a great blessing.

“I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me,” bowed down out of heaven, inclined unto me, stooped to me, thought well of me, and of my prayer also, “and heard my cry.”

2. *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.*

This is a wonderful song, full of rapturous joy. You know how Orientals were accustomed to cast their prisoners into pits, and these pits were often horribly deep, and dark, and damp, and the mud at the bottom would be such that a man would sink in it. David sings of the Lord, “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay.”

What a wonderful bringing up was this, and as God never does anything by halves, He did not let His servant slip back again, for David added, “and set my feet upon a rock.” “He set my feet.” When God sets a man’s feet, those feet are well set, there is no sliding, no slipping then. The Lord set David’s feet upon a rock, and more than that, established his goings, made them firm, so that when he stirred he did not stumble.

3. *And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God:*

Sing then, believer! Thou didst groan often enough in the pit, sing now that you are on the rock. You were desolate enough in the dungeon, sound aloud your grateful thanksgivings now that your goings are established.

3. *Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.*

There you have a picture of a sinner’s conversion and its effects. The man sees the Lord’s goodness to the child of God in distress. He fears, that is, he stands in awe of the great God, and then he also believes, he trusts in the Lord. One saint makes many, one child of God brought up out of the horrible pit leads to the bringing up of a great many others in the same way.

4. *Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.*

If you trust in God, you will have no reverence for the proud, nor for those who turn aside from God’s Word, and teach falsehood. If you really fear God, you will have no fear of men.

5. *Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*

The child of God, reviewing the Lord’s great goodness, feels that he can never count the mercies of God to Him, and as to telling them out, that can never be. It will be perhaps, a part of our eternal employment to tell angels, and principalities, and powers in the heavenly places the story of the lovingkindness of the Lord which we have experienced here below. If we had no troubles, we should have nothing to tell, but now that we are led in a strange way, and into very difficult places, we can write another page in our diary, which will be worth reading in those days when fictions shall all have been

consumed in the fire, but the great facts in the lives of the Lord’s people shall make God to be admired in His saints forever and ever.

6-8. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*

Spoke I not truly when I said that the Christ of God is here? To whom is this passage one hundredth part so applicable as to the Lord Jesus Himself? Does not Paul dwell upon this passage as teaching the putting aside of the old covenant law, and the bringing in of something better, even the obedience of Christ, our Savior?

However, this evening I wish to read the Scripture in reference to the saints, the Lord’s own people. I trust that many of us, seeing that God does not delight in ritualistic performances, and in the externals of religion, so much as He does in the obedience of the heart, can come to Him and declare with David, “I delight to do thy will, O my God.”

Beloved friends, you are not what you ought to be, you are not what you want to be, you are not what you shall be, but tell me, are you ever happier than when you are consciously doing the will of God? Do you not find misery in sin and delight in holiness? If you can say that it is so with you, then you are bound for the kingdom, you are on the way to complete victory over sin. Be of good cheer, He who has wrought in you this selfsame thing, to delight to do the will of God, will grant you grace to do it. He will bruise Satan under your feet shortly, and your inbred corruptions shall yet be uprooted by the Spirit of His grace.

9. *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.*

This is what Jesus can say. He was the Prince of open-air preachers, the Great Itinerant, the President of the College of all preachers of the Gospel, and I trust that many of us here can also say that, according to our ability and opportunity, we have tried to tell of Christ to those round about us.

10. *I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*

If any of you have done so, if there has been a sinful reticence about the things of God, if called to preach, you yet have not preached the full Gospel of God’s grace, the Lord forgive you and bring you out into a clear manifestation of what He has written within your hearts! We cannot tell what we do not know, and we ought not to try to do so, but what is graven in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we are bound to tell to others.

This gas was lighted that it might shine, and you received the divine fire that you might shine to the glory of God. It may be that, in some dark hour, it shall afford you at least a little comfort to be able to say, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation.” You may be able to use it as an argument in prayer, as the psalmist does, “I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation, therefore”—

11. *Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.*

Depend upon it, God will take care of us if we take care of His truth. If we, from cowardly reasons, keep back any part of the Gospel, God may leave us to defend ourselves, but if we conceal nothing that He has revealed to us, if we are faithful to the truth committed to our charge, that truth will itself preserve us, and we shall know more and more of the lovingkindness of the Lord.

But what a sad verse is the next one, if it describes the experience of any of you who have known the Lord!

12. *For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.*

If that is the condition of any one whom I am addressing, be comforted by the remembrance that another has been along that dark road where you are now found, and follow his example in praying to the Lord to deliver you—

13. *Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.*

Thus did David cry unto the Lord “out of the depths.” Imitate his example if you are in similar circumstances. Say with good John Ryland—

*“Out of the depths of doubt and fear,
Depths of despair and grief,
I cry; my voice, O Jesus, hear,
And come to my relief!”*

14-16. *Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha. Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee:*

Here is comfort for all poor trembling seekers, they are only seekers, but let us thank God that they are seekers, and let us say with the psalmist, “Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee.” All true Christians, those who have found Christ, are still seekers, for after finding Christ, they do their souls inflame to seek Him more and more. So that our prayer also is, “Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee”

16-17. *Let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified. But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.*

The Lord bless to us the reading of this precious portion of His Word, for His name’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—733, 587, 607

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.